



# San Diego City Attorney CASEY GWINN

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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CONTACT: David Karlin, Deputy City Attorney, Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, (619) 533-5645;  
San Diego City Attorney Media Information, (619) 235-5725.

### **LOBSTER THEFTS RESULT IN CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**

*Consumer and Environmental Protection Team Works to Preserve Ecological Reserve*

You can look, but don't touch. That is the message two San Diego men received when they were sentenced today for unlawfully taking 94 spiny lobsters from the La Jolla Ecological Reserve. The defendants, Alan Achenbach and Marc Sosnowski, each pled no contest to a misdemeanor violation of state Fish and Game law. San Diego Superior Court Commissioner Margie Woods ordered each defendant to complete 100 hours of public work service for the City of San Diego's Park and Recreation Department. In addition, the defendants must each pay a fine of \$715 and forfeit their diving equipment that was seized by the California Department of Fish and Game when the men were arrested.

In December 1999, San Diego lifeguards noticed the defendants getting out of the water near La Jolla Shores with large bags used to carry fish and other marine life. The lifeguards called the Department of Fish and Game, who discovered the defendants had 94 lobsters in their possession. The lobsters were photographed for evidence purposes and released back into the water.

The La Jolla Ecological Reserve was created in 1971 as a "Look, But Don't Touch" area to preserve native marine plants and animals in their natural state. It is unlawful to remove marine life from the reserve.

The case was prosecuted by the San Diego City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit. "It is important for us to protect our ecological reserves," City Attorney Casey Gwinn said. "This case demonstrates the efforts of San Diego lifeguards and Department of Fish and Game personnel, working in partnership with the City Attorney's Office, to protect one of San Diego's natural treasures."

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